BOB HANEY & NEAL ADAMS

DEADMAN™

I LIVE.

I..

AM..

..ALIVE!

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THE LAST DAYS OF DEADMAN BEFORE

DEADMAN FOLLOWED WILLIE SMITH, AN EMISSARY OF AN ANCIENT, ORIENTAL SOCIETY OF ASSASSINS, TO HONG KONG, WHERE A NEW ASSIGNMENT AWAITED THE MERCENARY..,
BRING HOOK IN!

CAPTURED, THE HOOK, ALSO A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY, WAS TAKEN TO AN ANCIENT TEMPLE TO STAND TRIAL FOR **FAILING** TO KILL BOSTON BRAND (DEADMAN)! TO BE ADMITTED TO THE SOCIETY EACH APPLICANT MUST PROVE AN ABILITY TO COMMIT A **PERFECT MURDER!**

HOOK'S SENTENCE: **DEATH!** DEADMAN TRIED TO PREVENT HOOK'S DEMISE BY ENTERING THE SENSEI'S BODY BUT **FAILED**--FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HIS DEATH!

SUSPICIOUS, THE SENSEI, LEADER OF THE ASSASSINS, HAD THE HALL CLEARED.., THEN, ALONE WITH HIS FALLEN ENEMY, DEADMAN HEARS...

HOOK IS DEAD, HAS A BALANCE BEEN STRUCK, MY SON?

A BALANCE?... HE KILLED ME... AND NOW HE'S DEAD.., I GUESS IT'S BALANCE...

NO! THERE'S NO BALANCE HERE! THE OFFENSE IS DOUBLED! THERE IS **NO JUSTICE!** WHERE IS THE BALANCE, RAMA KUSHNA?

ANSWER ME! **ANSWER ME!**

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NEAL ADAMS ART AND STORY

IN A MINOR PASSAGEWAY, A SMALL FIGURE PAUSES, AND THRUSTS ITS HAND THROUGH A **STONE WALL!** THE **ILLUSION** OF STONE HIDES **PERFECTLY** THE MECHANISM THE SENSEI NOW OPERATES!

AND...

HOOK... THEY'RE DISPOSING OF THE EVIDENCE... **HIS BODY!**

THE SENSEI, OR TEACHER, REALLY LIVES UP TO HIS NAME!

ANY COLD-BLOODED KILLER COULD **LEARN** A LOT FROM HIM!

DEADMAN

BUT I STILL EXIST!

SPLASH!

SPLASH!... RIGHT, THAT'S IT! THE END! WHAT DO I DO NOW?... WAIT HERE UNTIL I FADE AWAY? WELL, RAMA-BABY, IF I DO FADE, THE LAST THING THAT GOES IS MY **FRUSTRATION!!!**

...BLASTED EMPTY TEMPLE GIVES ME THE WILLIES! I'D RATHER FINISH THIS COMEDY IN THE **OPEN AIR,** EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T BREATHE IT...

SON-OF-A-GUN, IT'S **VASHNU** FROM THE CIRCUS! WHAT'S THAT OLD REPROBATE DOING HERE?

FORGIVE ME, RAMA-KUSHNA... I WAS SET UPON BY A ROGUE, NEAR THE WATERFRONT AND COULDN'T ARRIVE TILL NOW! I **HAVE THE SCROLL!**

ROGUE...? VASHNU... YOU WERE THAT OLD MAN THAT WILLIE SMITH CLOUTED WHEN HE WAS AFTER THE HOOK LAST NIGHT!!

I'VE GOTTA LOOK AT THAT SCROLL!

USING HIS UNIQUE ABILITY TO ENTER AND CONTROL A LIVING PERSON, DEADMAN UNRAVELS THE ANCIENT SCROLL WITH THE BONY HANDS OF **VASHNU!**

In the trembling evil of the world
A place is set aside
so that souls in bitter torment may lick their wounds and hide.
Rama holds a court-in care.
Tho' cold and stygian gloom enfolds,-
The blossom that is Nanda Parbat. There-the balance that is life is told.

MAN, IT SOUNDS PRETTY, BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

SOMEBODY DOWN THERE... COULD BE TROUBLE!

GOTTA **MOVE** THIS SPINDLY, OLD BODY!

KACHOW

KACHOW

YOU FOOL! HE WAS RIGHT IN YOUR SIGHTS!

HE CAN'T ESCAPE... **RELAX!**

THE SENSEI MUSTA LEFT THOSE TWO GOONS BEHIND... BUT WHY?

BEEOW

ZING

BEEONG

MOVE IN ON HIM! HE'S TOO WELL HIDDEN!

OKAY, BUT SLOWLY! SENSEI SAID TO EXPECT TROUBLE! THAT OLD GUY MAY BE MORE THAN HE SEEMS...

REMEMBER! THE SENSEI *LOOKS* LIKE AN OLD STOREKEEPER, TOO!

ONCE INSIDE ONE ASSASSIN'S BODY, DEADMAN LASHES OUT!

AGH...

WHAT'S A MATTER WITH YOU... YOU GO CRAZY?

YOU'LL FIND OUT IN A MINUTE, CHUM!

ENTERING THE SECOND ASSASSIN'S BODY, DEADMAN SWINGS A GUN UP... AND OVER... AND...

KRAK

HEY, WHY DID YOU WHACK YOURSELF IN THE HEAD? ...YOU FLIP YOUR BIRD?

ME? BUT YOU... HEY, IT'S THE OLD MAN! HE'S DOING SOMETHING TO US!

LET'S GET OUT'A HERE!

HAHAHAHAHAHA

SHAME, SHAME, VASHNU! NASTY OLD MAN... SHAKING UP THOSE NICE BOYS LIKE THAT! *HA HA!*

FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINS TO A DISTANT CLOUD-SHROUDED HILLSIDE, DEADMAN CONTINUES TO PONDER HIS FATE... OR LACK OF IT!

IT'S AS IF RAMA KUSHNA WAS WAITING FOR ME TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE!

SOMETHING SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ME BY NOW! BUT I FEEL NOTHING!

SOON...

NO, SENSEI! NEITHER OF US KNEW WHAT WE WERE DOING! WE BLANKED OUT! I DON'T...

ENOUGH!

YOU BEGIN TO BABBLE! I HAVE YOUR STORIES, AND I BELIEVE THEM! AS YOU LEAVE, SUMMON THE *VOLUNTEER* WHO WAITS OUTSIDE!

PREPARATIONS FOR "WIPE OUT" ARE COMPLETE, SENSEI! WILL I HAVE THE HONOR OF KNOWING THE NAME OF MY TARGET?

YES, WILLIE SMITH! THOUGH IT WILL HAVE LITTLE MEANING FOR YOU! IT IS NAMED *NANDA PARBAT!*

HE BELIEVES THEIR STORY? CURIOUS!

AS THEY TALK, THE SENSEI AND WILLIE SMITH ENTER A HIDDEN HANGAR...

NANDA PARBAT? THAT POEM... "THE BLOSSOM THAT IS NANDA PARBAT"... IT'S A PLACE! NOW WHAT DID THAT KILLER MEAN... "WIPE OUT"?

WITH YOUR LASER AND HAND WEAPONS YOU WILL DESTROY NANDA PARBAT AND ITS CARETAKER, TAJ ZE!

SO... "WIPE OUT" MEANS WIPE OUT!

AH, TAJ ZE! MY HONOR IS DOUBLE! HE'S BEEN A THORN IN THE SIDE OF THE SOCIETY FOR DECADES!

ANYBODY WHO IS A THORN IN THE SIDE OF THIS SWEET GROUP HAS EARNED A HELPING HAND!

BESIDES, IF NANDA PARBAT IS CLOSE TO RAMA KUSHNA'S STOMPING GROUNDS, I'LL NEED A GUIDE TO GET ME THERE!

AND SHORT HOURS LATER, ABOVE THE CLOUDS...

MOMENTS LATER THE HILLSIDE OPENS UP AND DISGORGES...

THE HIMALAYAS... BEAUTIFUL... THE ROOF OF THE WORLD!

HEY..."THO' COLD AND STYGIAN GLOOM ENFOLDS!"... THIS NANDA PARBAT... IT'S SOME KINDA SHANGRI-LA! BRO--THER, FIRST AN ORIENTAL SOCIETY OF ASSASSINS, AND NOW THIS!

HIGH OVER WIND-TORN PEAKS THE JET BEGINS TO CIRCLE... AND INSIDE, WILLIE SMITH PREPARES A DEADLY WEAPON!

WELL, IF IT IS SHANGRI-LA, AND THAT'S WHERE RAMA KUSHNA OR EVEN HIS PUBLIC RELATIONS MAN IS, I'M NOT LETTING THIS CREEP WIPE IT OUT!

I NEED A BODY... THE ONLY OTHER ONE ON THE PLANE... THE **PILOT'S!**

SETTING THE PLANE ON AUTOMATIC PILOT, DEADMAN, IN THE PILOT'S BODY, MOVES BACK TO THE REAR OF THE PLANE!

HEY... WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK HERE? WHO'S PILOTING THE PLANE?

DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU, YOU'VE GOT **OTHER** PROBLEMS!

YOU **FOOL!**

OH, GREAT! HE'S GOT HIS GUN OUT ALREADY...

WILLIE'S STRONGER THAN THIS PILOT, BUT I'VE GOT TO ABORT THIS MISSION!

IF I CAN GET THAT GUN...

BLAM

AYIIIIIEEEEEEEEEEE

GOOD LORD!

THE RELEASED PRESSURE... IT'S SUCKING HIM RIGHT OUT THE SMASHED WINDOW!

LEAVING THE PILOT'S BODY, DEADMAN CATCHES A LAST GLIMPSE OF THE PLUMMETING WILLIE SMITH...

GONE! THERE'S NO WAY FOR ME TO HELP HIM...

ANYHOW, THE PILOT'S SAFE... HE'LL HEAD BACK TO HIS HOME BASE!

NOW I CAN INVESTIGATE THIS NANDA PARBAT... IT MUST BE SOMEWHERE BENEATH THOSE CLOUDS!

THIS MUST BE IT... TREES... GRASS... FLOWERS WHERE THERE SHOULD BE SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAINS!

HEY! I'M LOSING CONTROL! I-I'M ACTUALLY FALLING... CAN'T SLOW DOWN...

HOW?... I CAN'T BE AFFECTED BY GRAVITY...

SCANT SECONDS LATER, DEADMAN FEELS A SOLID SUBSTANCE FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HIS DEATH!!

AGGGGG!

OHHH MAN! THAT GROUND'S HARD!... IT FEELS... FEELS?!

FORGOTTEN, THE PAIN FROM HIS FALL!

I CAN FEEL!

SUDDEN REALIZATION THUNDERS INTO DEADMAN'S MIND...

I CAN TOUCH THE EARTH... I CAN SMELL THE FLOWERS... AND TASTE THE WILD TANG OF LIFE! I FEEL!!

...THAT HE IS ONCE MORE IN TOUCH WITH REALITY!

I LIVE! I'M ALIVE!

HA-HA, I'M ALIVE! BEAUTIFUL! ... HUH!

WELCOME...

THIS HUMBLE ONE WELCOMES YOU TO NANDA PARBAT, THE LAND THAT WASHES AWAY OPPRESSION AND DESPAIR! I AM CALLED TAJ ZE!

MAAAN... YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN' ME!

NO, THIS HUMBLE ONE SETS ASIDE HUMOR ON SUCH OCCASIONS!

HERE IN NANDA PARBAT YOU ARE ALIVE, **OUTSIDE**, YOU STILL EXIST ONLY AS A GHOST!

YOU **LIE**! I'M ALIVE! I'M **REAL** AGAIN! I DON'T BELIEVE--

PROVE IT!

WITH HIS GUIDE CLOSE BEHIND, DEADMAN SCRAMBLES UP THE SIDE OF THE VALLEY AND THROUGH A CAVE TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD...

IT--IT'S TRUE! **GREAT!** I'M ONLY ALIVE IN THIS LOUSY VALLEY!

A CANDY-COATED **PRISON!**

YOU ARE FREE TO LEAVE, BUT WITH NO GUARANTEE AS TO WHETHER YOU WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST IN **ANY** CAPACITY!

BACK INSIDE NANDA PARBAT...

THIS IS LOTUS! SHE WILL MAKE YOU AWARE OF THE WONDERS OF THIS LAND WHICH HAS EXISTED SINCE THE BEGINNING MEMORIES OF MAN! I MUST RETURN TO MY GUARD DUTIES!

LOTUS, UNLIKE YOU, DID NOT WAIT UNTIL DEATH BEFORE SHE CAME TO US! HER PREVIOUS LIFE OF CORRUPTION FORCED HER TO SEEK PEACE WITH US!

HMMMM... THINGS ARE BEGINNING TO **LOOK** UP! SOME DOLL!

YOU'RE A GORGEOUS GUIDE, LOTUS, BUT I'M INTERESTED IN INFORMATION, NOT A **TOUR!**

WHY DOES A PLACE LIKE THIS NEED A GUARD LIKE TAJ ZE?

HE DOES NOT GUARD **US!** WE... **MOST** OF US, ARE CONTENT! TAJ ZE GUARDS THE GREAT TEMPLE-CAVERN!

IT IS HIS HONOR TO STAND AT THE GATEWAY TO **RAMA!**

RAMA! THAT'S IT! THAT'S WHAT I CAME HERE FOR!

I'VE FOUND HIM! **I'VE FOUND HIM!**

SINCE THE DAY I DIED, I'VE WAITED FOR THIS MOMENT!

RAMA KUSHNA HAS BEEN HANGING OVER MY HEAD LIKE A VULTURE... SILENT!

SILENT, BUT WITH THE POWER TO END MY EXISTENCE WITH A SNAP OF HIS FINGERS... BUT NOW... NOW I'LL FACE HIM!

HUK

WHOA... **HEY!!**

SWACK

NOT ONE STEP FARTHER, DEADMAN!

TO ENTER THIS SACRED PLACE THE RIGHT MUST BE EARNED!

CUT IT OUT, TAJ! I'M GOING TO SEE RAMA KUSHNA...

...DON'T MAKE ME FIGHT YOU!

OKAY, TAJ, YOU ASKED FOR THIS!

NO MERE HANDFUL OF DIRT CAN BLIND TAJ ZE, GREATEST SAMURAI OF THEM ALL!

THIS BIRD'S FANTASTIC! HIS SWORD IS ALMOST ALIVE... AND DEADLY... WAIT!...THAT'S IT!

GOT TO TIME THIS RIGHT...

I KNEW IT, YOU BIG PHONY!

YOU CAN'T HARM ME! YOU WOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO GUARD THIS PLACE UNLESS YOU WERE A MAN OF PEACE!

ALL YOU COULD DO WAS TRY AND **SCARE** ME OFF, TAJ! AND I **DON'T** SCARE! BE SEEIN' YA, BIG MAN!

OKAY, RAMA, I COULDN'T MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR SECRETARY SO I BARGED RIGHT IN! 'SCUSE IT!

AUDACITY IS YOUR CALLING CARD, DEADMAN, SO BE IT! I SEE THAT YOU WILL NOT BE HAPPY IN NANDA PARBAT! THEREFORE YOU HAVE COME TO ME FOR YOUR FINAL REST! I SHALL GRANT IT!

THOSE RAYS... RISING TOWARD ME...

HEY... JUST A SECOND!

...THOSE LIGHTS!

SURE, I DON'T LIKE YOUR NANDA WHATEVER-IT-IS! BUT I'M **NOT** READY FOR MY **FINAL** REST, EITHER!

IN CASE YOU FORGOT, I NEVER ASKED TO STAY AROUND TO FIND MY KILLER!

AND I'M **NOT** **ASKING** YOU TO LET ME STICK AROUND, I'M **TELLING** YOU... NO... **DEMANDING** YOU LET ME STAY!

SELFISH, DEADMAN! AFTER ALL YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN...

I NEVER ASKED TO BE SHOWN HOW LOUSED UP THIS WORLD IS... HOW FULL OF KILLERS, THIEVES, CON MEN, DRUG ADDICTS AND ASSASSINS! BUT YOU SHOWED IT TO ME! I ASKED FOR **NOTHING!**

MONKEY SPIT! WAS WHAT HAPPENED TO HOOK PART OF YOUR GIFT TO ME? **A GIFT OF FUTILITY!!**

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE IN CHARGE OF THE BALANCE OF GOOD AND EVIL IN NATURE! WELL, LOOK, JACK, YOU'VE DONE A **CRUMMY JOB!!**

GIVE ME A SHOT AT IT! I'LL CLEAN THINGS UP! THEN, AND ONLY **THEN**, WILL I REST EASY!

HEY! MY HANDS ARE DISSOLVING, **RAAAMA!** CUT IT OUT!

HUH? THEY'RE OKAY NOW! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

COME FORWARD, BOSTON BRAND!

YOUR PROTESTATIONS RING WITH THE TRUTH!

YOU, DEADMAN, SHALL GO FORTH AND ROOT OUT THOSE POCKETS OF INFAMY UNTIL **YOUR SOUL** AND MY JUDGMENT RECOGNIZE THE BALANCE ONCE AGAIN!

SAME CONDITIONS AS BEFORE?

SAME CONDITIONS! BUT AS YOU NOW KNOW NOT ALL HUMANS ARE VULNERABLE TO YOUR CONTROL!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO REMIND ME!

YOU ALSO HAVE WEAKNESSES WHICH UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES... NO... I... CAN SAY NO MORE!

THANKS! I NEEDED MORE PROBLEMS!

WITH A LAST GLANCE AT THE UNBELIEVABLE LAND OF NANDA PARBAT, BOSTON BEGINS HIS CLIMB TO THE CAVE EXIT...

THIS HUMBLE SERVANT WISHES YOU WELL, SON OF RAMA!

THANKS, TAJ!

KEEP YOUR KNEES LOOSE!

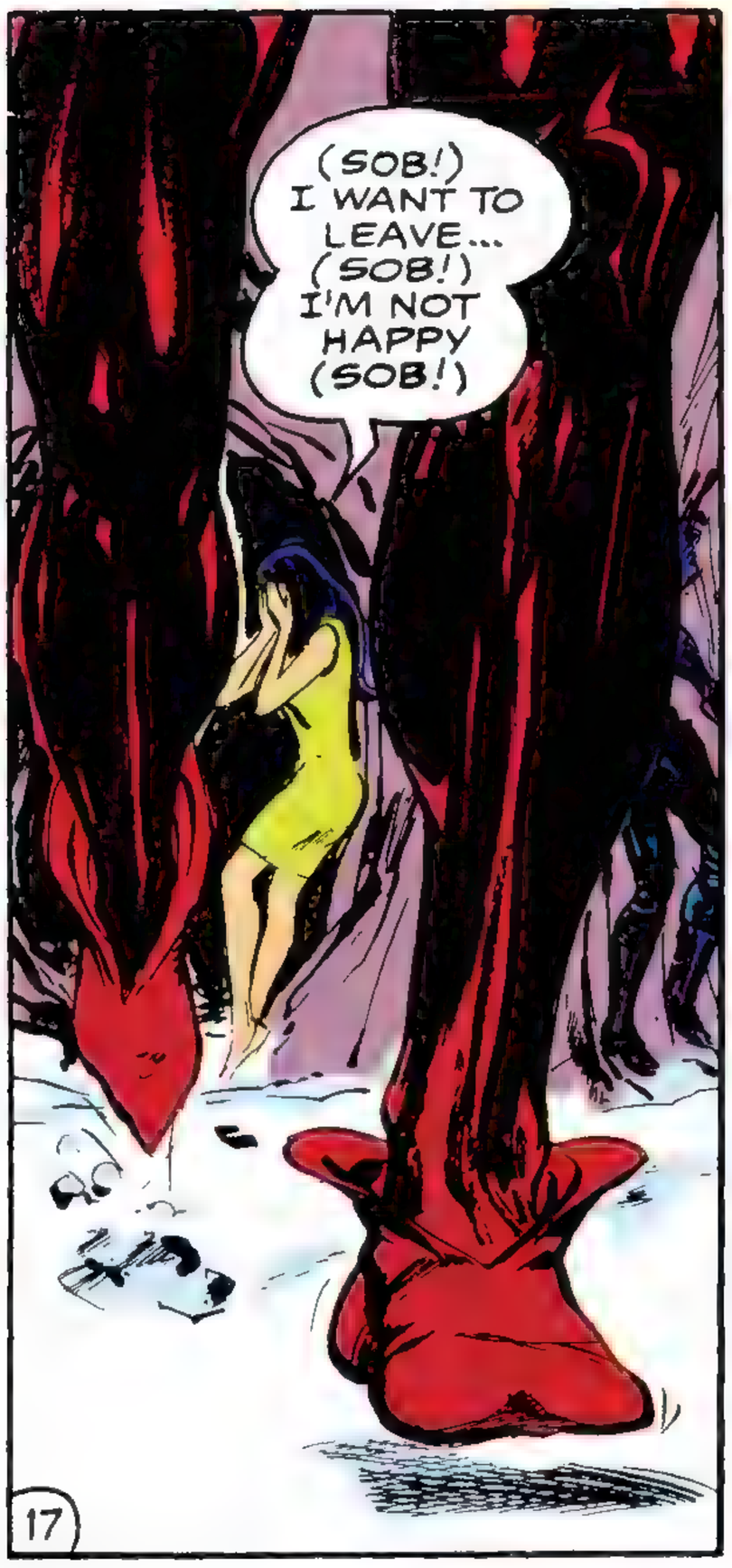
LOTUS?

DEADMAN, PLEASE... I KNOW YOU'RE LEAVING... TAKE ME WITH YOU... I'M NOT HAPPY HERE... I... I ***MISS*** THE OUTSIDE WORLD!

I'D LOVE TO, BABY, BUT I'M ON A ONE-MAN MISSION! BESIDES, NO ONE'S STOPPING YOU FROM LEAVING! IF YOU WANT TO GO, **GO!**

I WOULD... BUT FEAR OF WHAT I ***WAS*** HOLDS ME BACK... IF YOU...

SORRY, BABY!


(SOB!)
I WANT TO LEAVE...
(SOB!)
I'M NOT HAPPY
(SOB!)

MOMENTS LATER...
YOU WANT TO LEAVE...? ALL RIGHT! YOU'RE OUT!

THREE SHORT STEPS ARE ALL THAT SEPARATE LOTUS FROM THE MENACE OF HER FORMER LIFE! NOW SHE TAKES THOSE STEPS AND THE EVIL THAT THEY ONCE CONTAINED, RETURNS!

YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM A DEADMAN!

A LITHE, ANIMAL-LIKE FIGURE DARTS FROM SHADOW TO SHADOW... PAUSES... AS IF AWAITING A **CUE** FOR HIS STEEL-TAUT MUSCLES TO SPRING INTO ACTION...

THEN...

YOU AND YOUR GANG HAVE MADE YOUR LAST MISTAKE, COLLINS!

BOB HANEY STORY

NEAL ADAMS ART

TIME TO CLOSE UP SHOP, BOYS! THIS EXTORTION RACKET ENDS RIGHT HERE!

SAY IT AGAIN!

:UHHN:

BATMAN-- THANK GOODNESS! I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER GET HERE! ANOTHER MINUTE AND YOU'D'VE NEEDED A BLOTTER TO CLEAN ME UP!

NO NEED FOR :UH: CONCERN, MR. BATES! WE WERE WATCHING ALL THE TIME... AND COMMISSIONER GORDON IS JUST OUTSIDE IN CASE ANYTHING GOES WRONG!

STILL, BATMAN, BEING A PATSY IS VERY TRYING!

YOUR SACRIFICE IS APPRECIATED, MR.--

ROBIN, WHAT'S UP?

TIME... BATMAN...

YOUR TIME IS UP--AND THIS IS YOUR FINISH!

WHA--?

THEN, LIKE LIGHTNING...

THIS SMOKE PELLET WILL BLIND HIM JUST LONG ENOUGH!

DROP IT, ROBIN!

WHAT'S COME OVER HIM?

WAP

AS THE GUN CLATTERS TO THE FLOOR, ROBIN SLUMPS AS IF THE EVIL FORCE WHICH ANIMATES HIM, SUDDENLY DRAINS AWAY...

ROBIN... DICK, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?

BATMAN, WHAT'S ALL THE COMMOTION? SOMETHING GO WRONG WITH YOUR PLAN?

W-WHAT AM I DOING-- HERE ON THE FLOOR? I... REMEMBER BENDING OVER THAT THUG... THEN... NOTHING!

OR... WAS... ..... OFFICER... GIVE ME YOUR GUN!

QUICKLY...

I'M ABOUT TO PERFORM A SERVICE FOR MANKIND!

TO BE PRECISE...THE SERVICE OF OBLITERATING MANKIND'S GREATEST MENACE--THE *BATMAN!*

COMMISSIONER ...NOT *YOU*, TOO...? IS EVERYONE MAD?!

AGAIN THE SPRING-TRIGGER REFLEXES OF GOTHAMS GUARDIAN COME INTO PLAY, AND...

POW

SPEYANG

BUT IT *MUST* BE! MY OLD FRIEND...

DEADMAN...

IS TRYING TO *KILL* ME!

WHAT'S GOING ON...? I JUST BLANKED OUT--

YOU *JUST* TRIED TO *KILL BATMAN*, AND SO DID I-- BUT--BUT...

THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER... BUT IT'S TOO INCREDIBLE TO BELIEVE...

BATMAN! WAIT--!

BUT AS **BATMAN** RACES FROM THE DARKENED WAREHOUSE...

HAHA HAHA

IF I'M RIGHT AND IT **IS DEADMAN,** I'M IN BAD TROUBLE! THERE'S NO WAY TO FIGHT HIM...

...HE CAN'T BE SEEN...

:TAP: :TAP:

...BUT HE **CAN** ENTER AND TAKE OVER ANYONE'S BODY...

...AND USE IT AS A **WEAPON** TO TRY TO **KILL** ME! WHOOPS!

SWIISH

VERY GOOD, **BATMAN!** BUT HOW LONG DO YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP IT UP? **HA HA HA!**

...BLIND MAN SNAPPING OUT OF IT... BUT I SEE NOTHING ELSE!

WHY IS HE HUNTING ME LIKE THIS?

THE FIRST TIME WE MET, WE WORKED AS A TEAM!

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?

BEFORE BATMAN CAN RUN ANOTHER TWENTY YARDS...

TOO MANY PEOPLE...

MOMMY, LOOK! IT'S BATMAN! AND THAT MAN IS THROWING SOMETHING AT HIM!

SECONDS LATER...

KRASH

FLYING ATTACHÉ CASE... AND HEAVY ENOUGH TO KNOCK MY BRAINS OUT!

HEY, DENNY, LOOK AT THAT-- SOMEBODY'S TRYIN' TA BUMP OFF BATMAN!

I'M RUNNING A MADMAN'S GAUNTLET THAT HAS NO END...

WUMP

EVERY HUMAN I SEE IS A WEAPON IN THE HANDS OF DEADMAN!

SCREEEEEE

UH-OH

ONLY ONE THING TO DO...

A POWERFUL LEAP AND PERFECT TIMING COMBINE TO CARRY *BATMAN* UP AND OVER THE CAREENING TRUCK, AND THEN...

...GOTTA GET AWAY FROM PEOPLE!

BLAM

HA... SMART... BUT A FUTILE EFFORT, *BATMAN!*

FOR NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO, I'LL FIND A WAY TO GET YOU!

YOU DON'T HAVE A CHANCE, *BATMAN!* STAND.. AND TAKE YOUR PUNISHMENT LIKE A MAN!

FINALLY...

END OF THE LINE, BATMAN!

YOUR ROPE IS ALL PLAYED OUT, **BATMAN**-- YOUR DEATH WILL BE SMALL PAYMENT FOR INHUMAN SINS!

WHAT? ***DEADMAN!*** ***STOP...*** FOR A MINUTE! WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS...? WE WERE FRIENDS!

FRIENDS?! ***HA!*** YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE ***THAT?*** I'M HERE TO KILL YOU! TO WIPE OUT YOUR MISERABLE EXISTENCE!

YOU'RE A LIAR! YOU ARE ***NOT*** HERE TO KILL ME-- ***AND I CAN PROVE IT!***

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??? WELL, READER, HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS? WE'D ***ALL*** BETTER TURN TO THE FOLLOWING PAGE!

CONFUSION CLOUDS THE EYES OF *DEADMAN'S* HOST-BODY...

W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN--I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU? I'VE BEEN TRYING TO, FOR THE BETTER PART OF AN HOUR!

BUNK! YOU KNEW HOW EASILY I COULD DISARM ROBIN AND COMMISSIONER GORDON! I WAS IN *NO* DANGER! I HAD A GOOD EXERCISE SESSION WITH YOU IN THE STREET!

BUT THAT'S ALL!

THOSE BODIES YOU PICKED COULD ONLY HAVE HURT ME BY *ACCIDENT!*

AND AS FOR THAT PIGEON FANCIER YOU INHABIT NOW ...ONE SOLID PUNCH WOULD FLATTEN HIM!

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KILL ME, DO IT THE SIMPLE WAY...

JUMP INTO MY BODY AND MAKE ME JUMP OFF THE ROOF ...CLEAN AND SIMPLE!

NO... BUT... I DIDN'T...

YOU DIDN'T-- *WHAT?* ... WANT TO KILL ME?

WHAT'S GOING ON, *DEADMAN?* WHY ARE YOU ACTING LIKE THIS?

IS SOMEONE IN CONTROL OF YOU OR...

NO! NO... STOP IT...

YOU'RE TRYING TO CONFUSE ME!

ARRGHH

:HUH:? WHAT'S GOING ON--*BATMAN*, WHAT'S UP?

BLAST IT! *DEADMAN'S* OUT OF HIS BODY! CAN'T EVEN TALK TO HIM NOW!

UNFORTUNATELY FOR **BATMAN**, ALL THE QUESTIONS HE HAS ARE ABOUT TO BE ANSWERED... HALF-WAY AROUND THE WORLD AND A FEW HUNDRED FEET BELOW THE PRYING EYES OF ONLOOKERS...

THIS IS THE NEW CITADEL OF THE **SOCIETY OF ASSASSINS**, AND DEATH STALKS ITS EVERY CORRIDOR!

THIS GENTLEMAN IS CALLED THE **SENSEI**, WHICH MEANS TEACHER!

WILLIE SMITH! YOUR FAILURE TO DESTROY **NANDA PARBAT** HAS BEEN RECORDED! NOW I WILL HEAR YOUR DEFENSE AND THE TESTIMONY OF THE GIRL, LOTUS!

IT'S QUITE COMPLICATED, SENSEI, AND... ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE!

I WILL BE THE JUDGE OF THOSE TWO ASPECTS!

I AM WILLING TO ACCEPT FOR THE MOMENT THAT BOSTON BRAND, ALIAS **DEADMAN**, STILL EXISTS IN GHOST-LIKE FORM! CONTINUE FROM THERE!

ACCORDING TO LOTUS, WHEN **DEADMAN** CONFIRMED THAT HIS KILLER, "THE HOOK," WAS DEAD BY **YOUR** HAND, SENSEI, HE CAME TO THE LAND OF NANDA PARBAT TO SEEK OUT **RAMA KUSHNA** AND END HIS OWN EXISTENCE!

HE INTERFERED WITH **MY** PLAN TO DESTROY NANDA PARBAT, AND...

...THINKING ME DEAD, HE ENTERED THAT FABLED LAND OF BLOSSOMS AND GOODNESS AND SPOKE DIRECTLY TO THE **BALANCER** OF **GOOD** OVER **EVIL**, **RAMA KUSHNA!**

"NO ONE KNOWS WHAT TRANSPIRED BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM, BUT *DEADMAN* LEFT THE GREAT CAVERN WITH RAMA'S BLESSING..."

"EVEN THOUGH HE WAS AS A SOLID PERSON WITHIN *NANDA PARBAT*, HE CHOSE TO GO OUT INTO THE WORLD AS A *GHOST*."

"OF ALL THE INHABITANTS OF NANDA PARBAT WHO HAD COME FROM THEIR EVIL LIVES TO MAKE PEACE, ONLY LOTUS WISHED TO LEAVE. SHE PLEADED...BUT *DEADMAN* WOULD NOT TAKE HER WITH HIM..."

"I MANAGED TO TAKE HER FROM NANDA PARBAT..."

"HE SEEMED DAZED... SUGGESTABLE..."

BOONK

DEADMAN, WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHERE-ARE-YOU-GOING?

"AND JUST AS *DEADMAN* WAS BECOMING UNSOLID AGAIN, I SHOT HIM WITH A POISON DART...BUT BECAUSE OF HIS ALMOST UNREAL NATURE, HE WAS ONLY SLIGHTLY AFFECTED..."

MUST-GET-THE-SENSEI... HE-IS-MY-ENEMY-

TELL ME... WHO-IS-YOUR-BEST-FRIEND?

MY FRIEND... I GUESS BATMAN... HE'S MY FRIEND... ONLY FRIEND!

NO! NO! LISTEN TO ME...

I WAS HOPING TO TALK DEADMAN INTO WORKING FOR US, BUT HE CHOSE THAT MOMENT TO DEPART!

AND IF HIS ANGER FOR YOU, SENSEI, IS TRULY TRANSFERRED TO BATMAN, WELL--

THE SENSEI IS YOUR FRIEND! IT'S BATMAN WHO IS YOUR ENEMY! YOU MUST REMEMBER!

REMEMBER, YES... BATMAN MY ENEMY!

RARELY HAS ONE REDEEMED HIMSELF AS WELL AS YOU HAVE, SMITH... YOUR STRATEGY WILL SOON BEAR FRUIT!

AND WITH DEADMAN BUSY, I CAN GO FORWARD WITH MY PLAN TO DESTROY NANDA PARBAT... UTTERLY!

NO MORE WILL THERE BE A REFUGE FOR THOSE WEARY OF EVIL...

UNREST, DISSENTION, REVOLUTION, MURDER AND DESTRUCTION WILL RUN RAMPANT!

AND THERE, READY TO REAP THE SPOILS OF THE CARNAGE, WILL BE THE SOCIETY OF ASSASSINS!

OUR SERVICES WILL BE GREATLY IN DEMAND!

WHILE BACK IN GOTHAM, *BATMANS* FUTILITY LEADS HIM TO...

HILLS BROS. CIRCUS

MAYBE I CAN FIND SOME CLUE THAT'LL EXPLAIN HIS ODD ACTIONS!

HILLS BROS' CIRCUS! *DEADMAN* WORKED HERE BEFORE HE WAS KILLED!

MISS LORNA HILL, I'VE BEEN TOLD YOU MIGHT HELP ME. IT CONCERNS *DEADMAN!*

WHO?!... OH... OF COURSE...

YOU MEAN HIM!

WHAT!?... IS THAT REALLY *DEADMAN?*... I MEAN, BOSTON BRAND?

NO, *BATMAN!* BOSTON DIED MONTHS AGO! THAT'S HIS BROTHER, CLEVE! THEY WERE TWINS!

I'M SO WORRIED ABOUT HIM!

THE CIRCUS HAS BEEN HAVING MONEY TROUBLES, SO CLEVE DECIDED TO DO HIS BROTHER'S ACT FOR PUBLICITY.

BUT HE'S ONLY HAD A FEW MONTHS TO PRACTICE!

STRANGE, HE SEEMED TO STIFFEN THERE FOR A SECOND!...I WONDER--

INSIDE HIS BROTHER'S BODY, *DEADMAN* CLIMBS TO THE HIGH PLATFORM, WHERE...

AHHH-- BEAUTIFUL... I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH I MISSED THIS!

ALL RIGHT, BROTHER CLEVELAND, WE'LL PUT ON A SHOW THESE RUBES'LL *NEVER* FORGET!

WITH *REAL* MUSCLE AND SINEW ONCE AGAIN AT HIS COMMAND, *DEADMAN* PERFORMS HIS MOST DARING FEAT. OVER AND OVER HE FLIPS, *FOUR* TIMES...ONLY TO...

BELOW, INSTANTS BEFORE...

MUSCLES NOT SUPPLE ENOUGH! :UH:

...*MISS* THE CATCH BAR!

HE'S GONNA MISS THAT BAR...

BAT--

--MAN!

THANKS!

SHORTLY...

DEADMAN, YOU ARE INSIDE YOUR BROTHER'S BODY, AREN'T YOU?!

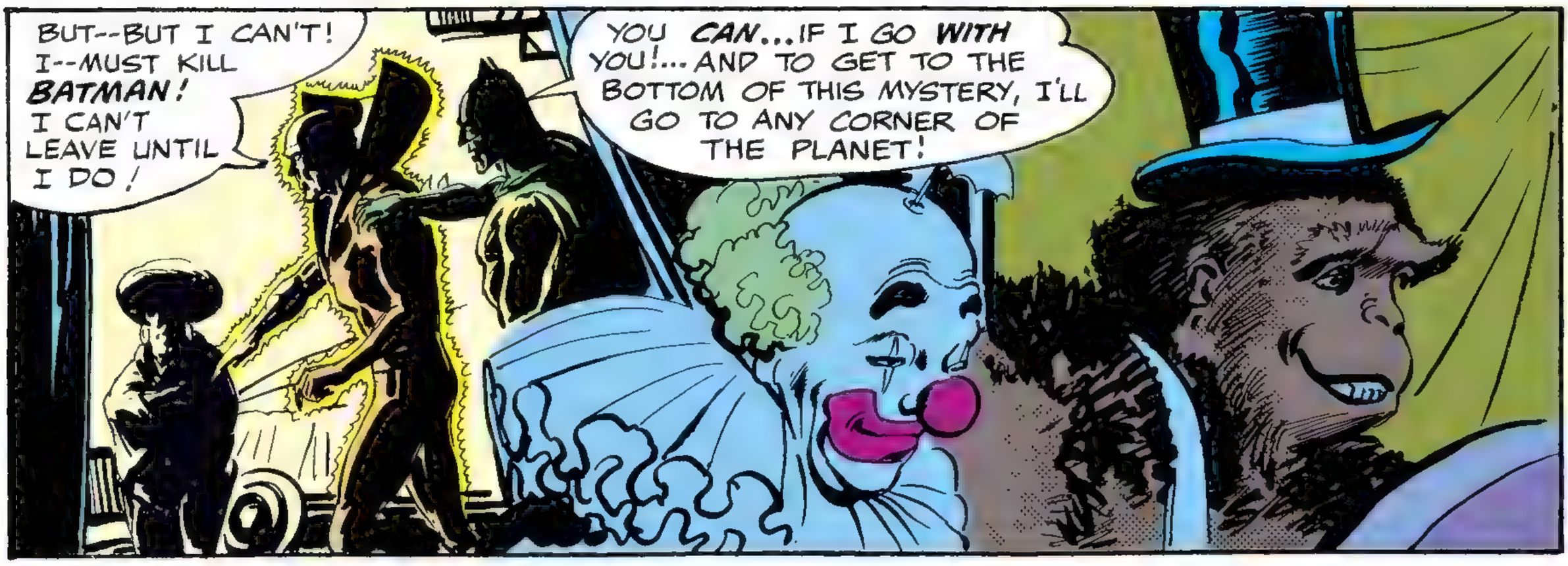
NEVER MIND THAT! HOW CAN I KILL A MAN WHO JUST SAVED MY BROTHER'S LIFE?

A LIFE I ENDANGERED, BY A FOOLISH, DANGEROUS ACT!

EXCUSE ME!

VASHNU!

RAMA KUSHNA HAS SENT OUT THE CALL. DEADMAN MUST RETURN TO THE BLOSSOM THAT IS NANDA PARBAT!


BUT--BUT I CAN'T! I--MUST KILL BATMAN! I CAN'T LEAVE UNTIL I DO!
YOU CAN...IF I GO WITH YOU!...AND TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS MYSTERY, I'LL GO TO ANY CORNER OF THE PLANET!
CLEVE...? IS SOME-THING...
...WRONG? NO, BABY, NOTHING'S WRONG! I'M JUST TAKING A LITTLE TRIP. I'LL BE BACK!
CLEVE...
...IF I DIDN'T KNOW BOSTON WAS DEAD... I'D...SWEAR...
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SHORT HOURS LATER, A PRIVATE JET (RENTED BY BRUCE WAYNE) WINGS TWO SOLITARY PASSENGERS HIGH ABOVE THE HIMALAYAS...

...TO THE BEWILDERMENT OF HIS BROTHER!

I'M SURE THIS IS THE AREA! I-- FEEL IT IN MY BONES.

GOOD ENOUGH!

VIP

WUP

VIIP

VIIP

VIIP

ZING

SOMEBODY FIRING AT US! THE CHUTES WON'T HOLD OUT!

IT'S THE *SENSEI* WITH ARMED TROOPS!

DEADMAN LEAVES...

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT AM I DOIN' HERE?

BATMAN! ...I-I WAS IN A CIRCUS TENT JUST A MINUTE AGO!

THAT'S WHY RAMA WANTED ME BACK.!

WHILE BELOW...

I'LL BREAK THIS UP SOON ENOUGH!

ENTERING THE BODY OF AN ATTACKER, *DEADMAN* TAKES THE OFFENSIVE...

COME AND GET IT, BOYS!

YOOWPP!

UH!

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON?

YOU'VE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE! THANKS, JACK!

BOK

BRING THAT MAN DOWN!

I'LL BREAK MY LEGS--! I'LL.....

I'M BACK, *BATMAN!*

AH--GOOD! *DEADMAN'S* BACK IN HIS BROTHER'S BODY! CLEVE WAS IN A PANIC... WE SHOULD HAVE FILLED HIM IN!

THANKS TO THE WIND CURRENTS, WE LANDED UPHILL FROM THOSE CHARACTERS! WHICH WAY NOW?

THIS WAY! I REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME IT SHOULD BE JUST OVER THAT RISE ...I HOPE, I HOPE!

THERE IT IS! I KNEW IT! IT'S AS IF I WAS DRAWN HERE TO MY... HOME...

...NANDA PARBAT!

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH!

TAJ ZE... I'M BACK! YOU'VE GOTTA HELP... ME... I'M...

WHAT'S HAP...

EASY, *DEADMAN*, DON'T...

HE'S LEAVING CLEVELAND'S BODY-- AND TURNING SOLID... BUT... SOMETHING'S WRONG! HE'S COLLAPSING!

HE'S HURT... HIS RESPIRATION IS WAY DOWN. HEARTBEAT, TOO!

BUT HOW CAN HE EXIST AT ALL IF HE'S DEAD?

BATMAN! WHERE THE BLUE BLAZES ARE WE-- AND WHO IS *THAT* IN THE OTHER *DEADMAN* COSTUME?

SEE FOR YOURSELF-- RECOGNIZE HIM?

BOSTON!... IT'S BOSTON, MY BROTHER! THE ORIGINAL *DEADMAN*-- BUT *HOW*!?

PAY HEED, FRIENDS OF BOSTON BRAND!

HE HAS BEEN POISONED BUT NOT UNTIL HE BECAME SOLID WAS HE COMPLETELY AFFECTED!

THE ANTIDOTE IS CARRIED BY ONE OF THOSE WHO CLIMB TO THIS HAVEN TO DESTROY IT!

THAT MUST BE RAMA KUSHNA!

THAT GROUP OF MEN, THE ONES WHO SHOT AT US! THERE MUST BE *THIRTY* OF THEM!

WE HAVE AN ADVANTAGE...THE ADVANTAGE ON WHICH I'VE BASED MY WHOLE CRIME-FIGHTING CAREER!

THE ELEMENTS OF *SURPRISE* AND *FEAR!*

GO... FRIENDS OF THE NOBLE *DEADMAN!* I WILL CARE FOR HIM AND PRAY FOR YOUR SPEEDY AND SAFE RETURN!

MAY THE GREATNESS OF RAMA BE UPON YOU!

SOON, AS A SCREECHING MOUNTAIN-WIND BLURS THE VISION OF DETERMINED INTERLOPERS...

SENSEI...THAT SCREAMING WIND SOUNDS...ALMOST HUMAN!

EEEEEEYAAAAAAAAAAA

NONSENSE!... NEVERTHELESS, KEEP A SHARP LOOKOUT!

THE AIR ITSELF SPEAKS OF DANGER!

AYIIEEEEEEE

YYYAGGG! W-WHAT IS IT?

UMPH!

UH!

SOMETHING GOING ON BACK THERE... CAN'T SEE WELL ENOUGH...

HA HA HA

MY GOD!

HA, HA! SURPRISE!

BAM

LIKE GHOSTLY SPECTERS, THE DUO APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR, WREAKING HAVOC UPON THE INVADERS!

STAY AWAY! STAY AWAY!

NO! EYYAGGGH!

RUN! RUN! WE HAVEN'T GOT A CHANCE!

STEP OUT INTO THE OPEN, YOU COWARDS! EVEN A GHOST CAN BE SHOT!

I PROVED THAT WHEN I POISONED DEADMAN!... SO COME AND GET YOURS... WHATEVER YOU ARE!

AS IF IN ANSWER...

A LITTLE PRESENT FROM DEADMAN!

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED!

POW

THIS IS THE GUY! HE HAS THE POISON AND THE ANTIDOTE!

LET'S GET IT BACK TO MY BROTHER, IF THAT'S WHO HE REALLY IS!

TWO COSTUMED FOOLS HAVE DESTROYED MY PLAN! TWO COSTUMED FOOLS WILL PAY FOR THAT ACT. YOU WILL BOTH BE LAID TO WASTE BY MY HAND!

BESIDES, I'M FREEZING!

SORRY, OLD MAN, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE! MAYBE SOME OTHER TIME!

YOU WILL BOTH REGRET THIS DAY!

A SHORT TIME LATER...

BOY, I FEEL AS THOUGH MY MIND HAS JUST BEEN THROUGH A WASHING MACHINE!

WHAT HAPPENS NOW, BOSTON? HOW COULD WE HAVE SAVED YOUR LIFE IF YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD?

THIS WHOLE THING IS TOO MUCH FOR ME!

I DON'T KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS, **BATMAN!** I JUST KNOW THAT I'M STILL DEAD, YET, I **EXIST...** AND THE ONLY PLACE I CAN BE FURTHER HARMED IS HERE IN NANDA PARBAT! THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS I'M GOING BACK TO BEING A GHOST!

"THE OTHER REASON IS THAT I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO PROVE TO MYSELF AND TO A CHARACTER CALLED **RAMA KUSHNA...**"

A SILENT FIGURE TRUDGES DETERMINEDLY DOWN THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE, EVEN NOW PLANNING A FITTING REVENGE FOR HIS TORMENTORS-- **BATMAN** AND **DEADMAN!**

NEVER **THE END.**